Looking back over the last forty years of child care in Sacramento County, there have been so many changes in both the types of child care available to parents and the ways in which parents find and choose care. One thing has remained constant, however, and that is the way that Child Action, Inc. has worked with parents, child care services and community partners to build and support a diverse system of quality child care options for the Sacramento community.

CHILD ACTION, INC.’s HISTORY

1970’s: The Beginning

In the 1970’s, child care services were primarily for three and four year old children in child care centers. Family child care homes were invisible to parents searching for care in their neighborhoods and infant center care was non-existent. Financial assistance was only available through Head Start and State Preschool Programs. In 1976, with limited funding through a new alternative child care bill, California began an experiment in diversifying the child care delivery system and created Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) and Alternative Payment (AP) Programs. This experiment helped parents find and pay for child care services so they could join the workforce or complete their education. It’s hard to imagine now, with instant access to information through the internet, but parents could not access information about child care except through the phone book.

Child Action, Inc. was one of the first fifteen programs funded in the state. Child Action, Inc. opened with three employees, which quickly expanded to ten giving parents a live person to talk with and get information on location, rates, ages served, program components and quality indicators. For the first time, working families had access to financial assistance to pay for child care services which were a whopping $5 a day or $25 dollars for a full week! Soon our switchboards were loaded with calls and we counseled parents all day long on the pragmatic and emotional issues of finding the best care for their family, as well as how to get help paying for child care services.

1980’s: Expansion of Child Care Services

In the 1980’s both the state delivery system and Child Action, Inc. expanded. Soon there was a CCR&R and AP program in every county of the state. Child Action, Inc. expanded to serve all of Sacramento County and Yolo County. As we became more aware of the needs of parents, we engaged with child care providers, helping them develop and improve their services to meet those needs. We also reached out to government, education and business partners, connecting community partners to the goal of creating affordable, accessible, quality child care.

Partnerships to Increase Family Child Care in Sacramento County

The California Child Care Initiative Program, or CCCIP, was initiated by the Bank of America in the mid 1980’s, with a focus on increasing the supply of child care where families live and work through the recruitment, training and licensing of family child care providers. Child Action, Inc. was funded by the CCCIP and secured matching funds from local partners including Sacramento County, City of Sacramento and Sacramento Employment and Training Program. Over the past thirty years, CAI has added partners and expanded the project to reach over 1,000 providers from different linguistic and cultural communities including those mono-lingual in English, Spanish, Hmong, Slavic and Middle Eastern languages. In 2001 the First 5 Sacramento Commission partnered
with CCIP specifically to increase child care services for the Slavic Community. In 2013 in partnership with Opening Doors and the Muslim Community Services Association, the CCIP project worked with refugee communities from the Middle East and helped develop child care services for Muslim communities.

The family child care training developed through the Child Care Initiative Project inspired a partnership with American River College and the development a college credit course in Family Child Care, now established statewide. This allowed family child care providers an opportunity to enroll in college, and continue their education in early childhood education. A National Child Care Study conducted in 2006 found that Sacramento County Family Child Care Providers were more likely to have attended college and/or completed an AA Degree than the national average, providing a high quality of child care to Sacramento families.

The Child Care Initiative Project has allowed us to move where the need for child care is most critical and develop our resources and enrich staff with the ability to serve the diversity of families living in Sacramento County.

Public Private Partnerships
In the early 1980’s a County Supervisor, Sandy Smoley, sponsored a grant from the National Association of Counties to explore a public/private partnership to increase the availability of child care services in Sacramento County. With support from the County Children’s Commission, Child Action, Inc. led a Child Care Coalition (CCC), made up of local government officials, business leaders and child care advocates. Over the decade the CCC promoted and developed local employer-supported child care centers with partners such as Eskaton and SMUD; worked with local developers to insure that child care services were included in the planning of business and residential developments with developers such as Grupe and Krum; instituted a developer fee at the City of Sacramento used to build child care services at public/private projects; supported the creation of Child Care Coordinators at both County and City governments; and, promoted child care as a viable economic engine in our community. The CCC also hosted annual “In Praise of Providers” Dinners that honored quality child care centers and family child care homes. With the passage of the Act for Better Child Care in the 1990’s, the Child Care Coalition was formally recognized and funded as the Sacramento Child Care and Development Local Planning Council.

In the late 1980’s Child Action, Inc. was funded by the County Department of Human Assistance to provide child care services through a new welfare to work program, Greater Avenues to Independence (GAIN). In both Sacramento and Yolo Counties, Child Action, Inc. provided assistance to families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) to help them find and pay for child care. In addition, funding was provided to both recruit and train family child care providers, building the capacity to serve these additional families, and also for the first time, collect and report on the supply of child care. Child Action, Inc. published its first report on the child care supply, documenting the gap between need and existing services. This report provided detailed information on ages of children served, geographic gaps in service, and cost of child care, which was then used by government planners and potential service providers to determine where to target resources in the development of child care services.

1990’s: National Expansion & Child Care Service Integration
The 1990’s brought an influx of federal dollars to support child care services with the Federal Act for Better Child Care (ABC) passed under the Bush Administration and supporting expansion of Child Care Resource and Referral and Alternative Payment Programs in every state of the nation. For the first time, child care was acknowledged as an economic necessity for families in this country.

Parent Advocacy
In 1994, with funding from the Jenifer Altman Foundation, Child Action, Inc. joined in a new advocacy effort, Parent Voices, with the goal of bringing back the parent voice to the child care movement. The daughter of one of our staff members, Chastity Benson, was a new parent and became our first Parent Voices Coordinator traveling to Washington D.C. during the Clinton Administration to participate in one of the most creative advocacy efforts ever envisioned! Parents from all across the nation brought two foot paper dolls, dressed and decorated in their children’s clothing, to Congress to represent the children who use and need child care services. There were dolls in the hallways, the senate chambers, and restrooms! Each congress and senate member received at least one doll which was presented in a meeting to explain the child care needs of families within their districts, which were based on data collected by the Resource and Referral Programs across the nation.

Expansion of Welfare Reform
The 1990’s brought incredible changes to Child Action, Inc. and the Sacramento community, with the implementation of Welfare Reform in 1997, which recognized that in order for women with children to move out of poverty, they needed to have financial assistance for child care costs. In partnership with the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance and with the increased funding from the federal government to help women move into the workforce, Child Action, Inc. became the primary resource for the allocation of child care funds in Sacramento County, and grew exponentially to employ over 300 workers and deliver as much as $100 million dollars in child care payments to the child care community. This influx of funding not only helped women move off welfare, but supported a growing child care profession, expanding the number of child care centers and family child care homes, and brought economic growth to traditionally low-income communities, where both parents and providers lived and worked.
2000’s: Local Expansion — Focus on Quality

New Funding for Children and Families — First 5

The California Children and Families Act, passed by voters in 1998, called for the formation of a State Commission to oversee and support the funding of education, health, and child care programs for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. This Commission became known as the First 5 California Commission and allocated proportional funding to 58 County First 5 commissions.

Health Care for Families:

One of the primary concerns of the First 5 Sacramento Commission was children’s health care. A new campaign, Cover the Kids, was initiated with the goal of health care coverage for every child under five in Sacramento County. In partnership with Cover the Kids, Child Action, Inc. was funded to reach out to families using child care services and enroll their children in a health insurance program. When the Affordable Health Care Act was funded, Child Action, Inc. continued assisting both families and providers in attaining health care coverage for their children and themselves.

Quality Child Care Collaborative:

The First 5 Sacramento Commission was also concerned that families had access to quality child care services in Sacramento County. In response to this, several organizations joined forces and submitted a joint proposal to address the needs of the Sacramento child care community rather than compete against one another. This new collaborative, the Quality Child Care Collaborative (QCCC), was designed to provide wrap-around support services to existing child care centers and homes, helping them enhance the quality of their programs and building skills of staff to provide the highest quality of care for children and families. Members of the QCCC included Child Action, Inc. as the administrator, the Sacramento County Divisions of Behavioral and Public Health, Sacramento County Office of Education Infant Development, Warmline Family Resource Center, WestEd Program for Infant Toddler Care, Child Abuse Prevention Council, UC Davis Extension-Center for Excellence in Child Development and Los Rios Community College District. For over fifteen years the QCCC has worked together to develop and provide two major programs: Sacramento CARES Program, which supports the education of child care workers, and the Quality Child Care Collaborative, which provides on-site counseling, training and technical assistance for child care programs in the development of quality child care services.

In July 2002, California passed legislation to increase the capacity to serve children with special needs in child care settings through a combination of planning, community education, training and technical assistance. Child Action, Inc. integrated this funding into the Quality Child Care Collaborative, partnering with the SCOE Infant Development Program and WarmLine Family Resource Centers. Three years after the implementation of this program, over 47% of the provider community reported caring for a child with special needs.

Two more projects were integrated into the work of the QCCC in the late 2000’s. The first is the Quality Enhancement Program, which provides training and assessment of quality in both homes and centers using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. The second is Brazelton Touchpoints Approach, training for providers, parents, and community members, supporting authentic relationships between parents and providers.

After forty years of concentrated work to support parents and child care providers in their efforts to raise healthy children, our role in the Sacramento Community remains consistent and of great value.

• We remain committed to helping families become self-sufficient, as we assist them in finding and paying for child care and health insurance. We will continue to help parents advocate for their children with public officials.

• We will continue to work collaboratively with other organizations to best use funds from both private and public sources to support parents and child care providers in raising healthy children who will do well in school and in their lives.

• We will continue to focus on developing child care services for families that fill gaps in service, whether it is developing child care in unserved geographic communities; recruiting providers who speak the language and understand the culture and values of families in our county; or enhancing existing provider’s ability to serve children with unmet or special needs.

• We remain committed to enhancing the quality of the child care services families need through nationally recognized programs, local education, and community programs, building upon the strengths of our existing child care community.
LYNN'S RETIREMENT THOUGHTS

1978 — Jerry Brown was Governor, gas was $.60 a gallon, minimum wage was $2.65 and I started working at Child Action, Inc. as an hourly employee gathering family data for the Tri-Annual Report for the Child Development Division.

Over the years I helped develop the vendor/voucher association now known as CAPPA, helped develop the Northern Directors Group, and have been very involved in supporting and growing the alternative payment program systems in Sacramento and throughout the state.

I thank all of my colleagues for the support and mentoring I have received throughout my 38 year tenure and look forward to my retirement.

I am very pleased to have worked for an agency that is dedicated to serving children and families and am honored to have been the Executive Director since 1998.

I wish everyone the best and hope our commitment extends well into the future.

Now, in 2016, as I prepare to leave, Jerry Brown is Governor, gas is $2.65 a gallon, and we have served thousands of children and their families. I am very confident that staff will continue the commitment and children will continue to receive quality care they need and deserve.

My best to Tracey Strack as she assumes her role in January 2017, as Executive Director and my sincere thanks to all staff for the work they have done over the years and the work they will continue to do in the many years to come.

WELCOME TRACEY STRACK AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILD ACTION, INC!

Tracey Strack is no stranger to Child Action, Inc. In fact, Tracey has been the head of finances at Child Action, Inc. as Controller for many years during her 18 year tenure at our agency. She has worked closely with Lynn to move the agency forward through good and bad times, gaining a tremendous understanding of the agency’s mission and vision.

“I was a junior in high school when Child Action, Inc. was established. While I never imagined then that I would be working for a non-profit agency, I will tell you that this has been the most rewarding time of my career. I began with the agency as an Accounting Supervisor, moving to Accounting Manager and Controller, and now, Executive Director! There have been many changes over the years and Child Action, Inc. has been very fortunate to have Lynn Patten as our Executive Director. She leaves huge shoes to fill! I am excited to lead such a dedicated team of professionals who work tirelessly to serve families in Sacramento County, fulfilling our agency’s mission and goals for many years to come!”

(Picture provided by Child Action, Inc.)
**Child Action, Inc. — By the Numbers**

- **03**: Number of employees when Child Action, Inc. opened in 1976
- **137**: Number of employees today
- **340K+**: Number of child care referrals provided since 1976
- **$484K**: 1st contract for AP services
- **$35.3M**: 2015 contract for AP services
- **$228K**: $228,627 – Amount spent on Health & Safety Scholarships for providers since 1997
- **1,373**: 1,373 – # of workshops for parents and providers since 2007
- **24K**: 23,768 – # of workshop attendees since 2007

*Statistics from Child Action, Inc. archives and annual reports.*
Rose Torres, the longest employed person at Child Action, Inc., retired on January 29, 2016, after nearly 40 years of service to families and children. Here’s a brief interview with Rose, as we celebrate her years of service.

Q: How did you become employed at Child Action, Inc.?
A: It’s kind of a funny story! I was working with SETA as a temp and they had me take a typing test for the Child Action receptionist position at another employee’s workspace. During the test, the phone rang repeatedly. I wasn’t sure what to do, so I answered the phone and took messages for the other employee. They weren’t impressed with my typing speed, but the way I took messages and answered calls got me the job! When I started, there were only 5 of us: the director, receptionist, bookkeeper, resource and referral staff, and a client services staff.

Q: What has changed at Child Action, Inc. over the years?
A: Lots! When we started referrals, we used index cards for every provider! When we needed to update providers, we used an eraser! Our index cards were sorted by zip codes— I still know all the zip codes of Sacramento County! I really was unsure when we went to computers. Our system worked well and I was worried about changing over.

The number of people and the personalities has changed over the years as well. Starting with five employees, growing to over 300 at one time with multiple offices, now to around 130 employees and one office, there’s been a lot of change. I’ll miss the people and the personalities the most.

Q: What hasn’t changed since you started at Child Action, Inc.?
A: People are still very low income and still have the need for child care. Parents are still very humble and grateful for Child Action, Inc.

Q: What are you most proud of during your time at Child Action, Inc.?
A: I’m most proud of the training I did with Spanish speaking family child care providers. I was training them on how to become licensed providers. They were so grateful for our assistance and training!

Q: What are you looking forward to in retirement?
A: Taking Yoga and Zumba classes and spending more time with my mother who is 95 years old. My husband who retired a few years back is very excited to have me around more!

Child Action, Inc. has been sending out newsletters since 1977. The first newsletter was intended for parents and the community, sharing about the services Child Action, Inc. provided and supporting families in raising their children. While the newsletter is almost 39 years old, the topics and family support are as relevant and useful today.

An article on nutrition included a homemade recipe for “peanut butter/raw honey candy” that families could make together. (Today, we might use different ingredients, but still support the idea of families cooking together, even the youngest members of the family!) Socio-emotional development was also a topic in the newsletter, giving parents some strategies to help children develop coping and self-regulation skills.

Child Action, Inc. encouraged parents and potential caregivers to exchange info through the newsletter, but the first newsletter was geared towards parents. The provider focus of our newsletter was not added until the 4th newsletter, sent out in October, 1977. Today, the newsletter is mailed out quarterly to over 2000 providers, parents, and community partners. It can also be found online at the Child Action, Inc. website.
### Board of Directors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diane Cromwell</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>American River College Emeritus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marge Tomczak, Secretary</td>
<td>(Retired)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loretta Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sacramento County DHHS FCCH Licensing (Retired)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liisa Behrends</td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Rancho Cordova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracy Tomasky</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chrysalis Coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Neill</td>
<td></td>
<td>Robla School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaci White</td>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Community Services Emeritus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Jane Maguire-Fong</td>
<td></td>
<td>American River College Emeritus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Child Action, Inc.

(916) 369–0191  
9800 Old Winery Place, Sacramento, CA 95827, www.childaction.org, info@childaction.org, facebook.com/childaction

All rights reserved. For reprint permission, email us at info@childaction.org

---

**Our Services**

Child Action, Inc. provides information and consumer guidelines to assist families in making choices regarding child care. We offer resources and services to assist current and new child care providers in providing quality care for children and we provide subsidies to help low-income families pay for child care services.

---

**Searching for Quality Child Care?**

**Sacramento's Trusted & Most Reliable Source for Child Care Information.**

Call Child Action, Inc. at 916-369-0191 / www.childaction.org